

## **BURKE CENTRE VRE PARKING FACILITY EXPANSION TASK FORCE**

### **Meeting 5 Summary**

The fifth meeting of the Burke Centre VRE Parking Facility Expansion Task Force began at 7:15 PM on January 21, 2004, at Supervisor Bulova's office. Supervisor Bulova asked everyone to introduce themselves, and she reiterated the Task Force's structure and the purpose of the subcommittees.

Supervisor Bulova then turned the floor over to Janyce Hedetniemi, chair of the Design Committee. Hedetniemi explained that David Bulova of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board gave a presentation on environmentally friendly options for building a garage. David Marshall of the Department of Planning and Zoning, along with Planning Commissioner Suzanne Harsel, had also offered guidance with respect to the "2232" hearing process.

Hedetniemi's committee developed a prioritized list of design and strategic elements: materials, ingress/egress, size, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design," and green/environmentally sensitive elements. The committee will elaborate on these points and present them to the full Task Force at the final meeting. (See handout "Report of the Burke VRE Design Subcommittee, First Draft" for more information.)

In response to the issue of the structure's size, Mike Lake of the Department of Transportation said that his office was in the process of preparing an answer to the Burke Centre letter. Supervisor Bulova stated that the county does not want to restrict the design severely at this point to ensure flexibility for changes that may be necessary in the design phase.

Mary Cortina asked about the status of VRE's new strategic plan. VRE's Jennifer Straub answered that the modeling and analysis is finished and will be presented to the VRE Operations Board on February 6. Supervisor Bulova interjected that the VRE ridership projections are just a roadmap for adopting the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). In response to a question about the ridership projections in the feasibility study, Straub said that the feasibility consultants would be given the data to review, but they would not be tasked with approving the numbers. Citing the feasibility study, Cortina also said that VRE's future "investment scenario" must be considered when planning the scale of the garage.

An audience member then raised two concerns about the station. First, if VRE does add cars to each train and extends the platforms, could more canopies be installed? Also, where will people park during construction? Supervisor Bulova turned the floor over to Steve Schrobo, chair of the Operations Committee, to answer that question.

Schrobo first announced that John Provost of Burke Centre had been selected as the South Community Lead at their last meeting. He then described the 13 information items that his group had requested in December (e.g. traffic counts, crime statistics, ridership projections) and their success with getting that information. Schrobo then asked for more information and statistics about the EZ Bus, parking availability at Target and the proposed Burke Centre Library, and the viability of the old Guinea Road cul-de-sac as a parking area.

Other items being considered by the Operations group included the impact of any proposed expansion of parking at the Rolling Road station on the Burke Centre station as well as the population in the areas directly adjacent to the Burke Centre station. Schrobo asked whether a license plate survey had been conducted at the Rolling Road, Broad Run, or Manassas stations. The group also proposed moving the Metro bus stop to a new location inside the parking lot to facilitate more parking. Schrobo stated that more formal recommendations would be included in his committee's report in February.

Schrobo listed some old traffic and ridership projection discrepancies that he hoped county staff, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), or VRE might be able to explain. VDOT had estimated in 1995 that, by 2010, 17,100 cars per day would use the Roberts Road overpass. However, VRE and county staff are using a traffic estimate of 24,000 cars per day in 2010. The Operations committee feels that the intersection of Roberts Parkway and Burke Centre Parkway as well as New Guinea Road and Roberts Road will be significantly over capacity with the increase in traffic expected from building a parking garage.

Schrobo reported that the crime statistics for the Woodbridge station garage in Prince William County were not dramatically different from the crime statistics at both the Burke Centre and Rolling Road stations. He also expressed his committee's continued concern about the baseball fields and the summer farmer's market. In conclusion, he made a preliminary recommendation that reducing the size of the garage to around 1100 spaces would be more appropriate; his committee would be addressing that question in detail at their next meeting.

Ray Foreman stated that ridership would level off if VRE does not expand their service. Jennifer Straub explained that VRE is already planning on adding another 800 seats to their trains across the system over the next 6 to 8 months as they acquire new cars. VRE also has a "memorandum of understanding" with CSX and Norfolk Southern to add more trains in the future. Straub said that VRE has been growing at a rate of about 18% a year, but they have been using a more conservative 5% growth rate in their models and projections. Dale Denda warned that using ridership as a benchmark for parking planning is risky; regardless of the intention to make this garage for a particular community, people will travel from more distant areas if parking is available.

Supervisor Bulova then invited Mike Brennan of the Pedestrian Access and Trails Committee to present his group's progress report. Brennan described his most recent meeting with his group and Florence Naeve of Supervisor Bulova's office. They hoped to provide specific recommendations to county staff to get realistic cost estimates.

Amongst their recommendations, Brennan's committee wants to explore the possibility of extending a Fairfax County Park Authority trail along the railroad tracks. They also have suggested creating some sort of trail to replace the "beaten path" that currently leads from the end of Walnut Wood Lane to the edge of Sideburn Branch. Building pedestrian bridges across Sideburn Branch is a group priority.

Brennan's committee also is interested in constructing a pedestrian bridge on the north side of the railroad tracks at either the far western end or the far eastern end of the station to avoid the wetlands. According to Larry Ichter of the Department of Public Works, such a bridge would cost about \$1.6 million.

Brennan also discussed the effort to build a staircase from the Roberts Road overpass to the parking lot. Previous efforts to build a staircase from the middle of the overpass were unsuccessful based on the size requirements for disabled persons and problems with maintenance during inclement weather. Additionally, VDOT did not feel comfortable putting a staircase in the center of the bridge without a crosswalk at the same location leading to the other side of the bridge. Due to problems with sight lines, however, a crosswalk at that point was not considered feasible.

Pedestrian improvements at the intersections of Burke Centre Parkway and Roberts Parkway as well as New Guinea Road and Roberts Road are also a priority for Brennan's group. Brennan explained that a tunnel under the railroad tracks was considered impractical due to the topography and the level of the water table. Florence Naeve mentioned a new type of pedestrian bridge made of fiberglass that the Park Authority has been considering for several projects; these bridges are inexpensive, easy to install, and particularly sturdy. Mary

Cortina asked if bicycle facilities and accessibility were being considered by the committee, and Brennan said that his group was most definitely discussing bicycle issues.

Supervisor Bulova then explained how the Task Force would proceed. At the next meeting, the committee chairs would be expected to present recommendations to the group at large. Those Task Force members who had been actively participating would then be given the opportunity to vote on the committee recommendations. This meeting, she explained, would be particularly long due to the amount of material that would be discussed. Then, in late summer or early fall, Supervisor Bulova would invite county staff, the Task Force members, and the community at large to review the architect's design plan.

Mary Cortina asked how the Task Force's recommendations would factor into the "2232" hearing. Commissioner Harsel said that she planned to have staff submit the Task Force recommendations as Attachment A of the "2232" application. She further stated that she would request that the site plan be returned to the Planning Commission for review prior to its approval. Commissioner Harsel estimated that the hearing would be held sometime in late April.

Supervisor Bulova reminded everyone of the Task Force's final meeting on February 18, 2004, at 7:15 PM. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Subsequent to the meeting, John Provost asked that the summary for Meeting 2 be amended to reflect the VRE estimate that 900-1500 *total* parking spaces are necessary, not 900-1500 *additional* parking spaces. An erratum was published and sent to the Task Force at large.

Attendees:

Supervisor Sharon Bulova  
Planning Commissioner Suzanne Harsel  
Florence Naeve  
Robert Glass

Larry Ichter, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)  
Carey Needham, DPWES  
Ken Lim, DPWES

Mike Lake, Department of Transportation (DOT)  
Karyn Moreland, DOT  
Dan Southworth, DOT

Jennifer Straub, Virginia Railway Express (VRE)  
Sirel Mouchantaf, VRE

Virginia Ashbrook  
Mike Brennan  
Dale Brown  
Steve Brown  
Mary Cortina  
Dale Denda  
Sam DiBartolo  
Shirley DiBartolo  
Ray Foreman  
Janyce Hedetniemi  
Tom Herbert  
Debra Holland  
Jason Jacks  
Everett Johnson  
Jamie Lewis  
Kevin Morse  
Jeff Nolan  
John Provost  
Deborah Richardson  
Leon Rose  
Glenn Russell  
Steve Schrobo  
Tom Schwarz  
Joann Sokol  
Amy Vogt  
Joe Wells  
Robin Williamson  
Joseph Wisnewski